

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 0434

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP EIND ECIN EEWT EMIN MO

SUBJECT: MINISTERIAL LEVEL GOM TEAM VISITS MOROCCO TO DISCUSS

MINERALS EXPLOITATION, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND TRADE

FOR NEA/AFN MONTVILLE AND EB-ENDERS

REF: (A) RABAT A-141;

(B) RABAT 5418;

(C) RABAT 0299;

(D) RABAT 5843;

(E) RABAT 0382

1. MOROCCAN MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION CURRENTLY IN MOSCOW IN CONTEXT PERIODIC MEETING INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION COMMISSION. AS REPORTED REF A, SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING STEADILY SINCE FIRST ACCORDS SIGNED IN 1958.

2. IN ADDITION TO FURTHERING SOVIET EFFORTS TO OBTAIN 10 MILLION METRIC TONS PHOSPHATE ROCK REPORTED REF B, WE UNDERSTAND DISCUSSIONS LIKELY TO INCLUDE APPROACH FOR SOVIET ASSISTANCE
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IN EXPLOITING MOROCCAN OIL SHALES. THIS BELIEF CONFIRMED BY

TALKS WITH UNIVERSITY SOUTH CAROLINA GEOLOGY TECHNICIANS WHICH REPORT THAT MEMBER OF GOM DELEGATION RABAH BOUCHTA, CHIEF DEPARTMENT MINING GEOLOGY, BRPM WHO, TECHNICIANS SAY, IS SOVIET-TRAINED, ANTI-AMERICAN, AND IN NO SMALL PART RESPONSIBLE FOR SUBSTANTIAL SPRINKLING OF SOVIET TECHNICIANS IN BRPM RANKS, IS PERSONALLY INTERESTED IN INVOLVING RUSSIANS IN OIL SHALE DEVELOPMENT. ALLAK KANOUNI, CHIEF HYDRO-CARBONS DIVISION, BELIEVED BY SOURCE CITED REF C TO BE SLATED AS DIRECTOR PLANNED GOVERNMENT ENTITY FOR EXPLOITATION OIL SHALES AND WHO IS US-TRAINED AND ANXIOUS TO COOPERATE WITH U.S. GROUPS, NOT RPT NOT INCLUDED IN DELEGATION. THIS GIVES ADDED THRUST TO SUGGESTION RECEIVED FROM BRPM CONTACT THAT IT NOT TOO SOON FOR U.S. FIRMS TO START MAKING INTERESTS AND ABILITIES KNOWN IF THIS AND OTHER MINERALS FIELDS NOT TO BE LEFT BY DEFAULT TO EASTERN EUROPEANS.

3. GROUP ALSO UNDERSTOOD TO BE LOOKING INTO WHAT IS HOLDING UP PROGRESS ON GOM/USSR LOUKKOS DAM PROJECT. KING BROKE GROUND YEAR AGO WITH CONSTRUCTION YET TO BEGIN. FYI: RUMORED IN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES THAT SOVIETS DRAGGING FEET AS LEVERAGE TO INDUCE GOM TO AFFORD PORT FACILITIES AS QUID PRO QUO FOR SOVIET AID. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THIS OR THAT SOVIETS HAVE MADE ADDITIONAL PUSH FOR PORT FACILITIES SINCE LOW-LEVEL APPROACH OF MAY 1973. END FYI.

4. FINALLY, GOM WILL ACCORDING TO RECENTLY PUBLISHED BUDGET REQUIRE ABOUT \$750 MILLION ADDITIONAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE FACILITIES THIS YEAR TO MEET ESTABLISHED DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND FINANCE ADDITIONAL AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS DUE TO EXPECTED CROP FAILURE. LOCAL CIRCLES EXPECT GOM TEAM TO BE LOOKING INTO WHAT MOSCOW CAN FURNISH IN TERMS OF FINANCING, AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES, AND INDUSTRIAL GOODS CREDITS TOWARDS CLOSING THIS GAP.

5. COMMENT: KING HASSAN HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST TO AMBASSADOR IN OBTAINING DOSSIER ON U.S. TECHNOLOGY AND LEADING DEVELOPERS OF OIL SHALE TECHNOLOGY. IN RESPONSE THIS REQUEST, WE HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH GULF DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND LOCAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA GEOLOGICAL TEAM, EACH OF WHICH HAS PROMISED TO PROVIDE SOME INFORMATION. BUT MUCH CONFIDENTIAL

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MORE SHOULD BE DONE TO ASSURE U.S. ACCESS TO MOROCCAN RAW MATERIALS. AMONG OTHER STEPS WASHINGTON MIGHT TAKE IS CAREFUL CONSIDERATION MARGINAL ADDITIONAL FINANCING REQUESTED BY U SOUTH CAROLINA/GOM GEOLOGY PROJECT TO COMPLETE MAPPING MOROCCAN MINERAL RESOURCES (REF E). GOM ALREADY PUTTING UP A MILLION AND A HALF DOLLARS AND USC HAS RAISED MORE THAN \$500,000 TOWARDS OWN SHARE. HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS OVER EACH OF NEXT THREE YEARS WOULD ASSURE CONTINUATION OF

PROJECT WHICH COULD OPEN WAY FOR EXPLORATION AND EVENTUAL MINING
OPERATIONS LEADING TO SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF WELL-PAID MINING
JOBS FOR UNSKILLED WORKERS IN HINTERLANDS, OPEN DOOR FOR U.S.
SUPPLIES OF MINIG EQUIPMENT, AND HELP PRESERVE U.S. ACCESS TO
SCARCE RAW MATERIALS. IN MEANTIME, WOULD, THROUGH USC TEAM,
PRESERVE CONTACTS U.S. TECHNICIANS WITHIN BUREAU OF MINES
COUNTERBALANCING SOVIET PRESENCE; CONSTITUTE FORTHCOMING
RESPONSE TO EXPRESSION OF ROYAL INTEREST; AND SERVE AS REASONABLY
HIGH PROFILE AND LOW-COST U.S. PROJECT OF GREAT POTENTIAL BENEFIT
TO RURAL POOR. END COMMENT.
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